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ABSTRACT

The lack of student discipline continues to be a major concern among educators and the general public. A researcher-developed opinion survey concerning the frequency of, sources of, and interventions for student misbehavior was completed by a sample of 312 students and 106 teachers from four private American-type schools located in Caracas, Valencia, and Maracaibo, Venezuela. Their responses were subjected to a series of one-way analyses of variance to determine if significant differences of opinion existed among the following groups: (1) female and male students; (2) 7th, 9th, and 11th graders; and (3) students and teachers. The female students and ninth graders perceived that student misbehavior occurs significantly more frequently than the other student sub-groups, but no such difference existed between the composite student group and the teachers. Although no significant differences regarding misbehavior sources or interventions were detected among the student sub-groups, the composite student group differed significantly from the teachers regarding both sources and interventions for student misbehavior. The need for increased emphasis on student participation in defining and implementing discipline policies and replicating the study with a more heterogeneous population sample were the major recommendations of the study. (Author/BJV)

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ABSTRACT

Perceptions of Teachers and Students Regarding the Frequency, Sources, and Solutions to Student Misbehavior

Mark A. Baron

The lack of student discipline continues to be a major concern among educators and the general public. A researcher-developed opinion survey concerning the frequency of, sources of, and interventions for student misbehavior was completed by a sample of 312 students and 106 teachers from four private American-type schools located in Caracas, Valencia, and Maracaibo, Venezuela. Their responses were subjected to a series of one-way analyses of variance to determine if significant differences of opinion existed between female and male students, Seventh, Ninth, and Eleventh Graders, and between students and teachers.

The female students and Ninth Graders perceived student misbehavior to occur significantly more frequently than the other student sub-groups, but no such difference existed between the composite student group and the teachers. Although no significant differences regarding misbehavior sources or interventions were detected among the student sub-groups, the composite student group differed significantly from the teachers regarding both sources and interventions for student misbehavior. The need for increased emphasis on student participation in defining and implementing discipline policies and replicating the study with a more heterogenous population sample were the major recommendations of the study.

UD 026 691

PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS REGARDING THE FREQUENCY, SOURCES, AND SOLUTIONS TO STUDENT MISBEHAVIOR

by Mark A. Baron

Among the most serious problem facing schools today is the lack of student discipline. Not only a primary cause of classroom disruption and lost instructional time, student misbehavior is a major contributor to poor academic achievement.

A review of the relevant research published in the literature confirmed that student misbehavior has been, and continues to be a major concern among educators and the general public. And, in spite of the growing body of research in this area, considerable disagreement still exists regarding which misbehaviors occur most frequently, the main sources of those misbehaviors, and the most effective means by which to reduce the occurrence of misbehavior in the classroom.

The present study was undertaken for the purpose of gathering data from teachers and students regarding the frequency of various student misbehaviors, their primary source(s), and the most effective interventions for preventing or controlling misbehavior in their classrooms. A total of 312 students (Seventh, Ninth, and Eleventh Graders) and 106 teachers from the U.S. Department of State-sponsored schools in Caracas, Valencia, and Maracaibo,

Venezuela (South America) participated in the study. The four schools, which comprise the Venezuelan Association of North American Schools (VANAS), are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Instruction is primarily in English and the schools employ U.S. curricular and instructional materials. All four schools are private and coeducational, having a total student enrollment of approximately two thousand and an overall student-teacher ratio of about 12:1.

The data for this study were collected using a researcher-developed student opinion survey and a corresponding teacher opinion survey. The respondents were requested to supply demographic data and to rate misbehavior frequency, source, and intervention items on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 5. A final pair of items concerning the extent to which misbehavior occurred and the degree to which learning was affected by student misbehavior in the respondent's school were also rated.

The data collected were analyzed for the purpose of comparing the students' perceptions by gender and grade level, and comparing the students' composite data to that gathered from their teachers. Specifically, the data gathered were grouped and analyzed for the purpose of testing the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference in perception, based upon students' gender, of which types of student mis-

behavior most frequently occur.

2. There is no significant difference in perception, based upon students' grade level, as to which types of student misbehavior most frequently occur.
3. There is no significant difference in perception of students and teachers regarding which types of student misbehavior most frequently occur.
4. There is no significant difference in perception, based upon students' gender, of the main sources of student misbehavior.
5. There is no significant difference in perception, based upon students' grade level, of the main sources of student misbehavior.
6. There is no significant difference in perception of students and teachers of the main sources of student misbehavior.
7. There is no significant difference in perception, based upon students' gender, of the effectiveness of various interventive techniques.
8. There is no significant difference in perception, based upon students' grade level, of the effectiveness of various interventive techniques.
9. There is no significant difference in perception of students and teachers regarding the effectiveness of various interventive techniques.

Each of these null hypotheses was tested using a one-

way between-subject analysis of variance with a .05 level of significance. A significant F value resulted in rejection of the hypothesis associated with that comparison. Any of the significant analyses containing more than two levels of the independent variable was subsequently subjected to a multiple range test using Scheffe's procedure (.05 level of significance) to determine which of the respondent groups was responsible for the significant F value. A final set of pair-wise comparisons was performed on the responses to each survey item using a series of one-way analyses of variance (.05 level of significance) to determine which specific survey items produced a significant difference of opinion between the various respondent groups. All statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-X).

Regarding frequency of misbehavior, the analysis by student gender indicated that the females perceived student misbehavior to occur significantly more frequently than the males. Talking/calling out in class and foul language/ disrespect to classmates were rated as the most frequently observed misbehaviors by both groups.

The grade level analysis yielded a significant difference between the groups, with the Ninth Graders perceiving student misbehavior to occur significantly more frequently than the Seventh or Eleventh Graders. No such significant difference existed between the Seventh and Eleventh Graders.

Again, talking/calling out in class and foul language/ disrespect to classmates were considered to be the most frequently observed student misbehaviors.

When all of the students' scores were combined and compared to those of the teachers, no significant difference of opinion was found. Both groups rated talking/calling out in class as the student misbehavior most frequently observed in their classrooms.

The analysis regarding sources of student misbehavior by student gender revealed no significant difference in perception between the female and male students. Both student groups rated inability to control one's own behavior and encouragement from classmates as the most important reasons for misbehavior in class.

When compared by grade level, no significant difference of opinion was expressed concerning the sources of misbehavior. All three grade level sub-groups perceived encouragement by classmates to be the most influential source of student misbehavior.

The students as a group, however, differed significantly from the teachers regarding misbehavior sources. Unlike the students, who placed the primary responsibility on their classmates, the teachers indicated that the parents not stressing good behavior at home was primarily to blame. The teachers also cited the inability of the students to control their own behavior and lack of parental concern as

secondary factors contributing to student misbehavior.

The final hypotheses tested concerned the effectiveness of various intervention methods in controlling classroom misbehavior. When compared by gender, no significant difference of opinion was noted between the female and male students. Both groups rated private reprimand well ahead of all other possible interventions as being most effective.

The analysis of intervention effectiveness by student grade level yielded a significant difference between the groups. Although all three groups rated private reprimand as most effective, the Seventh Graders' overall mean ratings were significantly higher than those of the Ninth and Eleventh Graders.

The students' combined scores for intervention effectiveness were significantly lower than the scores gathered from the teacher sample. Both groups, however, rated private reprimand as the most effective of all of the interventions.

The final two analyses performed related to the severity of misbehavior in the respondents' schools and to what degree the respondents perceived misbehavior to affect learning in their schools. Although the student gender and grade level comparisons yielded no significant differences, the students as a group perceived misbehavior to be a significantly more severe problem in their schools than their teachers. The student's overall mean rating of 2.80 (out

of a possible 5.00), however, was taken to indicate their belief that student misbehavior was not an overwhelmingly serious problem within their schools.

Neither the student gender nor grade level comparisons yielded a significant difference in opinion regarding the degree to which misbehavior was perceived to affect learning in their schools. Compared to the students, however, the teachers indicated a significantly greater belief that misbehavior affected learning in their schools. The teachers' mean rating of 3.68 (out of a possible 5.00) did indicate a relatively high degree of concern regarding the adverse effects of student misbehavior on learning in their schools.

The findings to emerge from the present study are relevant to educational practice for several reasons. The large number of significantly different perceptions of students and their teachers regarding student misbehavior suggests the need for increased teacher-student interaction in the classroom. Teachers should make the effort to ascertain their students' beliefs about the sources of misbehavior and effectiveness of different intervention approaches, and compromise with their students whenever possible. Any such sharing of input with students in the formulation and implementation of classroom discipline policies allows increased student ownership of those policies, resulting in greater compliance and a lower incidence of student misbehavior.

The fact that the students and teachers showed no sig-

nificant differences of opinion on a number of survey items also has implications for the classroom practitioner. These areas of agreement, whether relating to frequency, sources, or effective solutions to student misbehavior, should serve as common ground upon which teachers and students can work together to reduce misbehvior in their classrooms.

It is hoped that some of the findings to emerge from this study will stimulate further investigation into the causes and solutions to student misbehavior. It is further hoped that some of the major conclusions and recommendations to emerge from this study will serve as a basis for the implementation of new ideas and approaches to solving the problem of student misbehavior in our schools.